

St. Mark Roman Catholic Parish

55 Driftwood Drive, Kitchener, Ontario N2N 3A2
519-571-9200 | www.stmarkcatholicparish.org

Solemnity of Christmas

✧ **The Nativity of the Lord** ✧



“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ...”

JOHN 1:14

Mass Intentions for the Week

December 24 – 30, 2018

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

Monday, Dec. 24th (Christmas Eve)

5:30 PM – You are warmly invited to join St. Mark's choir for Christmas carols and hymns before the 6:00 pm Mass.

6:00 PM + Gerry & Lorie Feeney – Pat & Grace Feeney

11:00 PM – Int. of the Parishioners of St. Mark's

Tuesday, Dec. 25th (Christmas Day)

10:00 am + All those in whose memory donations were made toward Christmas Flowers

Wednesday (FEAST – ST. STEPHEN)

★ 7:00 PM – Intentions of St. Mark's C.W.L.

Thursday (FEAST – ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE)

★ 9:00 am – Intentions of Brian & Mary Jo Flood

Friday - NO MASS

Saturday - NO MORNING MASS

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY (Dec. 29/30)

Sirah 3:2-6; 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Luke 2:41-52

Sat. 5:00 PM + Sylvester, Clara, Charles & George – Brezina's

Sun. ★ 10:00 am + Kay Donovan – John

(Please note, only ONE Mass will be celebrated at 10 AM)

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Monday, Dec. 31st (New Year's Eve)

5:00 PM + Anna & Stephen Strauss & family – Lamers

Tuesday, Jan. 1st (New Year's Day)

10:00 am – Int. of the Parishioners of St. Mark's

(St.) Stephen's name means "crown," and he was the first disciple of Jesus to receive the martyr's crown. Stephen was a deacon in the early Christian Church. God worked many miracles through St. Stephen and he spoke with such wisdom and grace that many of his hearers became followers of Jesus. He was eventually stoned to death and he became the first Christian martyr.

St. John was called while mending his nets to follow Jesus and he became the beloved disciple of Jesus. He wrote the fourth Gospel, three Epistles and the Apocalypse. His passages on the pre-existence of the Word, who by His Incarnation became the light of the world and the life of our souls, are among the finest of the New Testament. He is the evangelist of the divinity of Christ and His fraternal love.

2018 Income Tax Receipts for Church Offerings

CORRECTION: Any offerings that you wish to have included on your 2018 tax receipt must be received by the parish no later than the 10:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Dec. 30th. Any donations received after that time must be put toward your 2019 tax receipt.



★ Bulletin Submission Deadline for Jan. 6th

The New Year's (Dec. 30) bulletin has already gone to print. If you wish to include something in the January 6th bulletin, copy must be emailed to Pam no later than Mon. Dec. 31st by 10 a.m. Thanks!

Meetings & Events This Week:

DATE	TIME	ROOM	EVENT
Mon. Dec. 24	8:00 pm	(M)	Alcoholics Anonymous
Wed. Dec. 26	6:30 pm	(CH)	9:30 Choir practice
	7:00 pm	(B)	Women's Prayer Group
Thur. Dec. 27	6:15 pm	(M)	Legion of Mary
	7:30 pm	(CH)	5:00 Choir practice
Fri. Dec. 28	6:00 am	(L)	Men's group

On this the last Sunday before Christmas, our Gospel reading prepares us to witness Christ's birth by showing us how Jesus was recognized as Israel's long-awaited Messiah even before his birth. The Gospel turns our attention from the ministry of John the Baptist to the events that preceded John the Baptist's birth. The story of John the Baptist and his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, are reported only in Luke's Gospel. Luke pairs the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, establishing John's early connection to the Messiah.

Our Gospel reading recalls Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angel Gabriel. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her cousin, who is also with child. Elizabeth greets Mary with full recognition of the roles that they and their unborn children will play in God's plan for salvation. If we were to continue to read the verses that follow in Luke's Gospel, we would hear Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting with her song of praise, the Magnificat. Both women recall and echo God's history of showing favor upon the people of Israel.

In Luke's Gospel the Holy Spirit helps reveal Jesus' identity as God to those who believe. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and sings Mary's praise because she bears the Lord. We sing these words of praise to Mary in the Hail Mary. Even John the Baptist, the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb, is said to recognize the presence of the Lord and leaps for joy.

It is appropriate in this season of Advent that we consider the role of Mary in God's plan of salvation. Elizabeth describes Mary as the first disciple, as the one who believed that God's word to her would be fulfilled. Mary's faith enabled her to recognize the work of God in her people's history and in her own life. Her openness to God allowed God to work through her so that salvation might come to everyone. Because of this, Mary is a model and symbol of the Church. May we be like Mary, open and cooperative in God's plan for salvation. ■

Christmas Tree Blessing

This prayer may be used to bless your Christmas Tree:

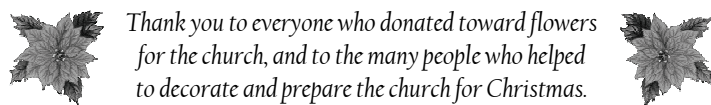
God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love. Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.





All Liturgical Ministers are reminded to sign-up for Christmas and New Year's Masses in the binder on the table in the narthex.

DEC. 29 - 30	5:00 PM Mass	★ 10:00 AM Mass ★
Altar Servers:	V.P./J. Miller N. D'Souza	E. Chang; B. Starr C. Chacon
Commentator:	K. Friesen	J. Germann
Lectors:	M. Dufresne	T. Boettger; J. Flanigan
Ushers:	A Montag K Friesen	F. Seaward M. Walser; C. Dignam
Gift Bearers:		Chacon
Eucharistic Ministers:	A. Bendia F./Y. Tully	T. Lee; H. Kress T./K. Boettger



2019 Sunday Missals – \$5 each
2019 Catholic Faith Calendars – Free will offering

Thank you! St. Mark's Knights of Columbus would like to thank the parishioners for their generous donations of **coats** and **boots** for the Salvation Army. Our donations were up 50% over last year! Well done!



During the Christmas season, our liturgy invites us to consider the birth of the Lord from many vantage points. As we begin this season, it is useful to remember that the stories of Jesus' birth and childhood are found in only two of our Gospels, Matthew and Luke. Throughout this season, we will hear stories from both Gospels. Those Gospels tell different but complementary stories about Jesus' birth, highlighting items of theological importance about the Incarnation and the salvation that Jesus brings.

On this day, the Feast of Christmas, we are given the details of Christ's birth as found in the Gospel of Luke. Here we learn about the census that brings Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born. We also hear about the angel's announcement of this good news to the shepherds. In these details, we find two of Luke's particular concerns: (1) to locate the coming of Christ in the wider framework of salvation history as good news for all people, Gentiles and Jews, and (2) to show the Lord's favour upon the poor and lowly.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is born as one of the poor. Laid in a manger in a stable, because there was no room at the inn, he comes into the world through obscure and surprising means. Yet, as the angel proclaims this good news to the shepherds, this infant is announced as the Messiah and Lord. In the song of the angels, all are invited to give glory to God for this miraculous birth, in which God comes to share our humanity.

The angels sing that Jesus' coming brings peace. Yet there is little in the details of this Gospel that gives evidence of peace. Jesus is born as a traveller away from home, born in a stable in a crowded city under the occupation of foreigners. The appearance of the angel to the shepherds frightens them. When the angels proclaim Jesus' birth as the harbinger of "peace on earth," the evangelist Luke clearly wants us to take the long view. The shepherds are invited to claim a faith that will enable them to see this infant as a sign God's promise of a messiah. It is through such faith that one finds the peace of which the angels sing.

Come, Lord Jesus Come.

Fill our gift giving with generosity, making us aware to the true gifts we have to share with loved ones.

Deepen our sense of joy, making us ever grateful for the small gifts others bestow upon us.

Enlarge our capacity for compassion, making us mindful of how we might give to those in need of sustenance and consolation.

Come into our hearts and homes this Christmas, Lord Jesus, making us people of joyful generosity and gratitude.

Stir us in our faith as we profess Jesus Christ as Savior of the world. Amen.

Wishing everyone a Merry and Blessed Christmas.

– Fr. Steve and Nicholas

C.W.I. Corner



♦ Nominations for your 2019/2020 Executive Council

open December 1st! Please pick up nomination forms from the CWI mail slot on the wall in the Narthex or print as many copies as needed from the email sent to members the first week of December. Nominate as many ladies as you like, including yourself! Completed nomination forms can be dropped in the labelled slot in the large wood cabinet in the Narthex by Dec. 28th.

♦ **"Keep Christ in Christmas" CAR MAGNETS** - \$5 each in the narthex.

♦ **Next Mass for CWI Intentions:** Wed. Dec. 26th at 7:00 PM*

Parish Office – Holiday Hours

Open 9 am - 12 noon:

Dec. 24, 27, 28,
Dec. 31, Jan. 2, 3, 4.

CLOSED:

Dec. 25, 26
and Jan. 1.

The Diocese of Hamilton is conducting the *One Heart, One Soul* campaign to raise money for every Parish in the Diocese and for shared ministries. A compilation of "Frequently Asked Questions" are available throughout the campaign at www.oneheartonesoul.ca.

Vocation Seeds – Are you called to follow in the footsteps of Mary as a priest or religious consecrated man or woman, or deacon to carry the Good News of God's great Love? If you think God is calling you to be a priest, contact Fr. Michael King, Vocation Director, Diocese of Hamilton at 905-528-7988 or email vocations@hamiltondiocese.com.



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